



Morning Alert - Wednesday, September 7, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to reports that the UN Security Council issued a press statement on Tuesday condemning the DPRK's repeated missile launches. NTV, TBS, and Fuji-TV led with reports on Typhoon Namtheun, which is expected to make landfall in the Tokai and Kanto regions on Thursday. TV Asahi gave top play to a report that the Japanese men's soccer team beat Thailand in a World Cup qualifying final on Tuesday.

Top stories in national dailies included President Obama's [remarks](#) in Vientiane (Asahi), discussions on Emperor Akihito's desire to abdicate (Mainichi), a GOJ plan to set an upper limit on overtime work (Yomiuri), plans by Sumitomo Chemical and other Japanese material manufacturers to boost production of a material essential for lithium-ion batteries used in electric vehicles ([Nikkei](#)), and divided opinions among the nine policy board members of the Bank of Japan on the bank's monetary policy (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

President Obama's Asia strategy not yet fully implemented

Asahi gave top play to a report on President Obama's [remarks](#) in Vientiane, Laos, on Sept. 6, during which he referred to his administration's "rebalancing toward Asia" policy. The paper wrote that although the President emphasized strengthened relations with Japan and other allies as achievements of the policy, the administration has not yet achieved its goal of convincing China to act according to U.S.-led rules. The President stressed that he will make efforts to seek congressional endorsement of the TPP before his term ends in January next year by saying that failure to move ahead with the free trade pact would not only have economic consequences, but also

call into question America's leadership in the region. But despite the fact that the TPP is a core pillar of America's rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, Congress appears to be reluctant to approve it by the end of this year. With China's claims over the South China Sea in mind, the President indicated that the U.S. plans to continue its "freedom of navigation" operations in the South and East China Seas by saying that bigger nations should not dictate to smaller ones.

Yomiuri and Nikkei also reported on the President's remarks in Vientiane, with Yomiuri commenting that although the President underscored the United States' continued commitment to the Asia-Pacific region, he was not able to dispel Asian nations' concern about U.S. leadership there because he did not present specific measures to deal with China's challenge to the international order.

President Obama cancels meeting with Philippine leader

All papers reported on President Obama's cancellation of a meeting with his Philippine counterpart Duterte planned for Sept. 6 in Vientiane. The papers speculated that President Obama probably cancelled the meeting due to Duterte's repeated criticism of the U.S.'s concern over the recent extrajudicial execution of more than 1,000 people in an anti-drug campaign in the Philippines and his insulting remarks about President Obama on the matter. Duterte issued a statement of apology for his remarks after the cancellation of the meeting. The papers speculated that the episode may affect bilateral relations over the South China Sea and other issues. Asahi wrote that the Obama administration's policy of rebalancing toward Asia could be undermined if relations between the two nations deteriorate. Yomiuri wrote that the strategy to form a coalition by the U.S. and its allies against China will be shaken if the schism between the U.S. and the Philippines deepens. Nikkei conjectured that China will take advantage of strained relations between Washington and Manila.

Abe, Duterte discuss South China Sea, defense cooperation

All papers reported on a meeting between Prime Minister Abe and Philippine President Duterte in Vientiane on Sept. 6, during which the two leaders confirmed the need to respect the arbitration ruling on a South China Sea dispute. Abe told Duterte that Japan will supply two 90-meter patrol vessels, financed through yen loans totaling roughly 16.5 billion yen. The papers speculated that the move is intended to keep China in check by helping the Philippines bolster its coast patrol capabilities. The two leaders also confirmed a plan for Japan to lend five MSDF TC-90 training planes to the Philippine Navy. This is the first implementation of the agreement reached between the two nations in February for Japan to transfer defense equipment and technology to the Philippines.

Japanese, Laotian leaders agree on need for peaceful solution of South China Sea disputes

Yomiuri and Nikkei reported on bilateral talks held between Prime Minister Abe and his Laotian counterpart Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith in Vientiane on Sept. 6, during which the two leaders confirmed the importance of the rule of law in the South China Sea and their nations' cooperation in resolving the disputes in the region through peaceful means. The two leaders also agreed on a joint plan to accelerate infrastructure development in Laos.

Japan, China to hold meeting on maritime communication mechanism

Nikkei wrote that Japan and China plan to hold a meeting of senior officials on Sept. 14-15 in Hiroshima to discuss the details of the agreed-upon establishment of a maritime and air communication mechanism between the two nations. Officials from the two nations' foreign affairs and defense ministries and the Japan Coast Guard will attend the meeting.

Nikai to visit Vietnam

Mainichi wrote that LDP Secretary General Nikai stated at a news conference on Sept. 6 that he will visit Hanoi on Sept. 8-10. Nikai, who chairs a bipartisan parliamentary friendship caucus for Vietnam, will attend a ceremony for the opening of Vietnam-Japan University and hold meetings with parliamentary leaders of Vietnam.

SECURITY

MOD may use SDF helicopters to transport heavy machinery to Northern Training Area

NHK-BS1 reported on Tuesday evening that it learned that the Ministry of Defense is considering using SDF helicopters to transport heavy machinery to the construction site for the helipad at the Northern Training Area in order to proceed with construction without being affected by ongoing protests. The network said it is rare for the MOD to use SDF helicopters for construction work at a U.S. military facility, adding that the ministry is studying the possibility of using them starting in mid-September if no other option is available. The network also said a CH-47 helicopter was seen carrying heavy machinery at the GSDF's Kisarazu Air Field in Chiba on Tuesday afternoon.

